

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

Powell, Robert. 1990. *Hemidactylus palaichthus*.

Hemidactylus palaichthus Kluge

Hemidactylus brookii baitianus: Meerwarth, 1901:17 (part).

Hemidactylus palaichthus Kluge, 1969:39. Type locality, "Kurupukari, Guyana (4° N, 59° 25' W)". Holotype, American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) 60931, an adult male, collected by R. Snedigar on 2-3 October 1937 (not examined by author).

Hemidactylus brookii palaichthus: Mertens, 1973:9.

- **Content.** No subspecies are recognized.

• **Definition and Diagnosis.** *Hemidactylus palaichthus* has a snout-vent length (SVL) to 63.1 mm and is distinguishable from other New World geckos by the following combination of characters: dorsum with granules and large trihedral tubercles, a hemidactyl digit whose subdigital lamellae reach the origin of the fourth toe, 12-19 loreals, 2-11 cheek tubercles, 8-12 supralabials, 7-10 infralabials, 17-25 rows of body tubercles, 17-28 tubercles in paravertebral rows, 2-4 tubercles in caudal whorls, 3-6 scales between whorls, 9-11 lamellae on the 4th toe, and 32-43 preanal pores. Auricular scales and interpreanal pores are absent. Snout-eye length is 10.37-12.46% of SVL and eye-ear length is 8.55-9.96% of SVL.

The ground color is pale gray or brown to dark gray. The dorsal pattern, when present, is dark brown to nearly black and consists of a latticework of 7-10 narrow reticulate marks and a pair of often discontinuous dorso-lateral narrow reticulate marks. The dorsal surface of the tail is covered with about 10 faint to conspicuous relatively wide bands or numerous irregularly shaped and positioned spots.

• **Descriptions.** The only complete description of the species is in Kluge (1969).

• **Illustrations.** Kluge (1969) included a black and white photograph of the holotype. Tuck (1972) and Hoogmoed (1973) provided black and white photographs of specimens from Little Tobago Island and Surinam, respectively.

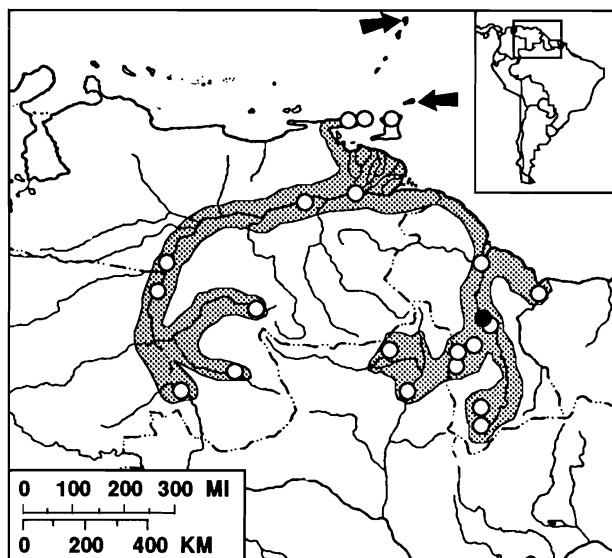
• **Distribution.** The range is associated with the Orinoco, Essequibo, and Corantijn River systems of central and northeastern Venezuela, Guyana, northern Brazil, and extreme northwestern Surinam. Kluge (1969) illustrated a range including many intervening areas. Lacking records and noting that New World *Hemidactylus* often function as human commensals, the range here is restricted to sites from which vouchers exist and connecting areas that follow routes of human activity. *H. palaichthus* is also found on the islands of Trinidad, Tobago, and Little Tobago, all of which have faunal communities with very high continental elements. The only West Indian locality is Maria Island off the southeastern coast of St. Lucia.

- **Fossil Record.** None.

• **Pertinent Literature.** Kluge (1969) commented on zoogeography and relationships with *H. brookii*. Tuck (1972) documented the species on Little Tobago Island and noted that earlier specimens were listed as *H. mabouia* by Dinsmore (1969). Hoogmoed (1973) refined the range in Surinam. Mertens (1973) included *H. palaichthus* (as *H. brookii palaichthus*) in a key to the reptiles of Tobago. Schwartz and Thomas (1975) and Schwartz and Henderson (1988) discussed distribution and commented on the species' status. Staton and Dixon (1977) provided ecological notes. Rivero-Blanco and Dixon (1979) described habitat in the Llanos of Venezuela.

• **Etymology.** The name *palaichthus* is from the Greek word *palaichthon*, meaning "indigenous inhabitant", and presumably refers to the fact that *H. palaichthus* is indigenous to the New World.

- **Comment.** Kluge (1969) described *H. palaichthus* as a New



Map. Solid circle marks the type-locality, open circles other records. Arrows indicate insular populations.

World endemic derived from *H. brookii baitianus*. Mertens (1973) considered *palaichthus* a subspecies of *H. brookii*. Schwartz and Thomas (1975) and Schwartz and Henderson (1988) noted Mertens' view, but followed Kluge.

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Primary editor for this account, Andrew H. Price.

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